

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Record of Decision

Contra Loma Reservoir and Recreation Area Resource Management Plan

ROD-11-090



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

February 2015

Mission Statements

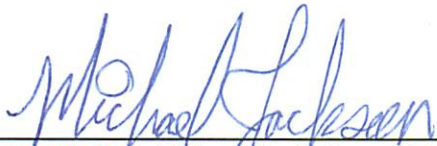
The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provide scientific and other information about those resources; and honor its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
South-Central California Area Office, Fresno, California

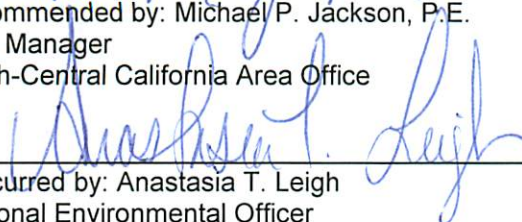
ROD-11-090

**Contra Loma Reservoir and Recreation
Area Resource Management Plan**



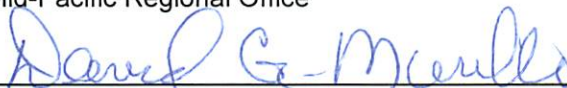
Recommended by: Michael P. Jackson, P.E.
Area Manager
South-Central California Area Office


Date

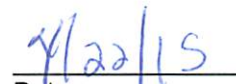


Concurred by: Anastasia T. Leigh
Regional Environmental Officer
Mid-Pacific Regional Office


Date



Approved by: David Murillo
Regional Director
Mid-Pacific Regional Office


Date

Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has prepared a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Contra Loma Reservoir and Recreation Area (Contra Loma) located in Contra Costa County, California. The 741-acre Recreation Area consists of the 80-acre Contra Loma Reservoir and approximately 661 acres of surrounding land, including the Contra Loma Regional Park and the Antioch Community Park. Contra Loma Reservoir was constructed in 1967 as part of the Central Valley Project (CVP). The Recreation Area was opened to the public in 1968 with few developed recreational facilities. The Contra Loma RMP is a long-term (25-year) plan to guide management of the resources on the federal lands of the reservoir and recreation areas. The primary emphasis of the RMP is to protect the water supply and quality of Contra Loma Reservoir while balancing the management of natural and cultural resources with enhancements to recreational uses within Contra Loma.

The Contra Loma RMP addresses resource management alternatives for the Plan Area as appropriate for water quality, recreation, and natural resource and cultural resource management opportunities. All recreational uses and improvements at the lake must be consistent with the original purpose of the CVP and should not interfere with providing a reliable annual yield of high-quality water. The guidance provided in the RMP will help Contra Loma managers fulfill Reclamation's mission, which is "to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public." The RMP will also provide the framework for establishing new management agreement(s) with local managing partner(s).

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents Reclamation's decision to follow a specific direction for resource management provided in the alternative selected for the Plan Area. This ROD has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 USC 4321 et seq.) and the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508). The decision made herein is based on the information and analysis contained within the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Contra Loma RMP, which is incorporated by reference and was published on September 22, 2014. Reclamation has considered all comments received on the Proposed Action in developing this ROD.

The Contra Loma RMP is a programmatic, planning-level document that provides management direction at a broad scale and is not intended to provide project-level detail of future management actions or projects. For this reason, the EIS evaluated the environmental impacts of each RMP alternative in a programmatic manner. Future actions carried out under the purview of the RMP beyond the

status quo actions under the No Action Alternative and the programmatic analysis presented in the EIS will be subject to project-level NEPA analysis including cultural and biological resources compliance.

Decision

Reclamation's decision is to implement Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative) as described in the Final EIS. This Alternative was found to meet Reclamation's statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical and other factors. Implementing this alternative would allow greater flexibility to its local managing partner(s) for enhancement and expansion of current recreational uses and public access while still protecting water quality, natural resources, and cultural resources.

Alternatives Considered in the Final Environmental Impact Statement

Three management alternatives were developed to address the planning objectives of the RMP. Each alternative provided direction for resource programs based on the status quo and potential future development of specific goals and management actions. Each alternative described specific concerns influencing land management and each emphasized a different combination of resource uses, allocations, and restoration measures to address concerns and resolve conflicts among users. None of the alternatives includes site specific actions, and the analysis is representative of the kinds of impacts expected to occur.

One important characteristic of the alternatives is that the management actions are additive under each successive alternative. The Enhanced Recreation and Facilities Alternative (Alternative 2) includes all of the management actions that would be included in the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1), and the Expanded Recreation and Facilities Alternative (Alternative 3) includes all of the management actions that would be included in the other two alternatives.

No Action (Alternative 1 – Status Quo)

For the No Action Alternative, the current resource and recreation management direction and practices at Contra Loma would continue unchanged and includes actions that would have otherwise occurred. The activities described are existing and ongoing, and represent the expected future condition if the RMP were not implemented. This alternative addresses certain public comments requesting no

further substantive change in management direction or intensity be made at Contra Loma. The description of the No Action Alternative on Final EIS pages 2-10 through 2-15 reflects the current management direction and level of management intensity for the Plan Area. The No Action Alternative provides the appropriate basis by which all other alternatives can be compared. It meets all the primary goals of the Contra Loma RMP except for provision of enhanced or new recreational uses and facilities.

Enhanced Recreation and Facilities (Alternative 2)

Under this alternative, the management direction would be shifted toward enhancement of current recreational uses and facilities. This alternative includes management actions to enhance, replace, or upgrade existing recreational uses and facilities and installation of new facilities to expand or complement existing uses and facilities. Examples include upgrades to restrooms, the swim lagoon, fishing piers, the trail system, the boat launch, and administrative buildings. Examples also include new facilities such as additional restrooms, sewer lines, picnic sites, parking areas, and habitat restoration activities. Alternative 2 involves no major expansion of recreational facilities. This alternative also includes boundary adjustments between the Regional Park and the Community Park.

Expanded Recreation and Facilities (Alternative 3)

Under this alternative, the management direction would be shifted toward expansion of recreational uses and facilities. This alternative includes the management actions listed under Alternative 2 and provides additional management actions to expand existing recreational uses and facilities and to install new facilities that expand recreational opportunities. Examples include construction of a fishermen's shelter, a playground structure, a disc golf course, new multi-use sports fields, and expansion of the swim lagoon and the trail system. Other examples include planting of shade trees, installation of shade structures and solar panels, and fish habitat improvements to increase fish populations. This alternative may also include overnight group camping.

Basis of Decision, Issues Evaluated, and Factors Considered

Reclamation evaluated the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed alternatives on land use, recreation, visitor access and circulation, utilities, public health and safety, water resources, vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, geologic and soil resources, climate and air quality, noise, visual resources, hazards, cultural resources, socioeconomics, environmental justice, Indian Trust Assets, Indian

Sacred Sites, and paleontological resources. The analysis was programmatic in nature as no site-specific analysis was conducted. Further site-specific analysis will be required to implement the Preferred Alternative.

There will be no impacts to Indian Trust Assets as there are none in the Proposed Action area. The nearest Indian Trust Asset is approximately 28 miles west of the Plan Area.

Alternative 1 would continue the management actions identified in the Final EIS Sections 2.5 and 2.6 on a project-by-project basis with no overall coordinated direction, and no recreation facility enhancements would take place. Alternative 1 does not increase recreation opportunities that many user groups have requested in public meetings and written comments (see Appendix A and D of the Final EIS).

Alternative 2 would enhance current recreational uses and facilities at Contra Loma while minimizing changes to Contra Loma's recreation setting and adverse effects on natural resources. Alternative 2 also does not increase recreation opportunities that many user groups have requested in public meetings and written comments (see Appendix A and D of the Final EIS).

Reclamation has selected Alternative 3, based on interdisciplinary team recommendations, environmental analysis of the alternatives, and public input. Alternative 3 provides the greatest flexibility to Reclamation's local managing partner(s) for maintaining the status quo and enhancing and expanding recreational opportunities while still protecting water quality, natural resources and cultural resources. The elements of the Contra Loma RMP Preferred Alternative (Alternative 3) are detailed in Section 2.7 of the Final EIS.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The term Environmentally Preferable Alternative is defined as the alternative that will best promote NEPA as expressed in Section 101 [42 USC § 4331]-Congressional Declaration of National Environmental Policy. Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.

Alternative 1 is identified as the Environmentally Preferable Alternative because it would cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.

Alternative 1 was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it does not meet the purpose and need for an RMP with updated management objectives, goals, and actions while still protecting water quality, natural resources and

cultural resources consistent with the authorized purposes of the lands associated with Contra Loma Reservoir.

Implementing the Decision and Environmental Commitments

Reclamation will enter into management agreement(s) with local managing partner(s), which will provide for the implementation of the RMP/EIS and ROD. Reclamation has adopted all practicable means to avoid or minimize potential adverse effects on the environment that will result from the implementation of the Preferred Alternative. Where applicable, Reclamation and its local managing partner(s) will implement avoidance and minimization measures as specified in the management actions listed in Section 2.4.3 in the Final EIS. Reclamation will require site-specific environmental analysis and appropriate mitigation for all proposed actions under Alternative 3. Reclamation will serve as project lead for implementation of laws to protect water quality, natural resources, and cultural resources including but not limited to the:

- NEPA
- Endangered Species Act
- Clean Water Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement

Reclamation's Notice of Availability of the Final EIS was published on September 19, 2014, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Notice of Availability was published on September 26, 2014. Copies of the Final EIS were distributed to those who requested a copy. A press release was issued on September 22, 2014, and sent to the recipients on the Contra Loma RMP/EIS mailing list. The Final EIS was also made available on Reclamation's website at: http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=6396. Only two comment letters on the Final EIS were submitted after issuance of the Notice of Availability. The substantive issues raised in the comment letters and Reclamation's responses are summarized as follows.

Kathleen M. Goforth, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, October 23, 2014

1. The comment notes that Mitigation Measure AQ-1 in the Final EIS was updated to include the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's mitigation measures but that Section 4.12.7 did not integrate the additional measures recommended by the EPA (e.g., a commitment to the best available emissions control technology for project construction equipment). The comment recommends the incorporation of the EPA's previous recommendations for mitigating air quality impacts from future construction projects into Mitigation Measure AQ-1. **Response:** As described in Section 4.12.7 of the Final EIS, when specific projects or actions are identified, a site-specific environmental analysis will be conducted to quantify air quality impacts and identify appropriate mitigation measures to comply with the Clean Air Act and Bay Area Air Quality Management District's rules and Regulations, including but not limited to best available emissions control, if applicable. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into proposed projects or actions, as appropriate, to minimize air quality impacts and ensure conformity with the State Implementation Plan.

2. The comment notes that Sections 3.1.1, 4.8.4, 4.9.8, and 4.10.3 do not reflect the changes indicated in the response to comments in the Final EIS regarding health and environmental impacts associated with herbicide use. The comment recommends the ROD incorporate the intended modifications and update Management Action-19 to ensure the provisions are incorporated into subsequent pesticide management plans. **Response:** As described previously, the Contra Loma RMP is a programmatic, planning-level document that provides management direction at a broad scale and is not intended to provide project-level detail of future management actions or projects. For this reason, the EIS evaluated the environmental impacts of herbicide use under each alternative in a programmatic manner. Each of the sections in the Final EIS was updated as needed to reflect this. Future actions, including the use of herbicides, carried out under the purview of the RMP will be subject to project-level NEPA analysis and compliance. Management Action-19 in the Final EIS was updated to reflect this.

3. The comment recommends that the ROD update Management Action-51 to specify a requisite buffer distance between the reservoir and proposed grazing areas in order to protect water quality. The comment also recommends including a monitoring plan to ensure the reservoir's water quality is not affected. **Response:** As described in Response to Comment F-1-5 (page 15 in Appendix G), grazing activities are currently set back from the reservoir by a 500- to 1,000-foot buffer zone to reduce potential fecal matter from entering the water. In addition, Management Action -51

requires a Reclamation-approved grazing management plan which will include measures to control grazing-related impacts to water quality in the reservoir.

4. The comment recommends a firm commitment in the ROD to project-specific NEPA analyses and agency consultations. **Response:** The ROD makes clear the intention to prepare site specific analysis for actions required to implement Alternative 3. Agency consultations will be completed as needed during project-specific NEPA compliance.

Fran Garland, Contra Costa Water District, October 20, 2014

1. The comment requests a clear statement in the ROD that water supply is the paramount use of Contra Loma Reservoir and recreation is secondary. **Response:** As described in Section 1.4 of the Final EIS, Contra Loma Reservoir is operated as a component of the CVP. Management of the land surrounding the reservoir is secondary to operation of the CVP and is required to support Reclamation's core mission of managing, developing, and protecting water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner.
2. The comment requests a commitment in the ROD to use protection of water supply and water quality as key criteria in reviewing all proposed recreation facility improvements and major program changes. **Response:** As described previously, the primary emphasis of the RMP is to protect the water supply and quality of Contra Loma Reservoir while balancing the management of natural and cultural resources with enhancements to recreational uses within Contra Loma. Protection of water supply and water quality are key criteria that will be used to review all proposed recreation facility improvements and major program changes.
3. The comment requests language in the ROD confirming Contra Costa Water District's role in reviewing and approving proposed recreation facility improvements and major program changes as provided in Article 33 of the current management agreement between Reclamation and East Bay Regional Park District. **Response:** Reclamation will be negotiating new management agreement(s) with local managing partner(s). Reclamation will continue to collaborate with Contra Costa Water District and other interested parties to ensure the public's interests at Contra Loma, including water quality and water supply, are protected.